

A PARADISE X™ PRELUDE

MARVEL
PG

HERALDS



MARVEL®
COMICS

1 of 3

7 59606 05169 4
\$3.50 US \$5.25 CAN
www.marvel.com

DIRECT EDITION
00111

Barcode: 7 59606 05169 4

KRUEGER
PUGH

A PARADISE X PRELUDE

HERALDS

CHAPTER ONE

JIM KRUEGER
story and script

ALEX ROSS
story, cover painter and character designer

STEVE PUGH
artwork

NICK BELL
colors

TODD KLEIN
letters

MIKE RAICHT
assistant editor

MIKE MARTS
editor

JOE QUESADA
editor in chief

BILL JEMAS
president

PARADISE X™: HERALDS Vol. 1, No. 1, December, 2001. Published by MARVEL COMICS, a division of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 10 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 2001 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price \$3.50 per copy in the U.S. and \$5.25 in Canada. GST#127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. PARADISE X: HERALDS (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. Printed in the U.S.A. PETER CUNEO, Chief Executive Officer; AVI ARAD, Chief Creative Officer; GUI KARYO, Chief Information Officer; BOB GREENBERGER, Director – Publishing Operations; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus.

ON THIS WORLD, A WORLD WHERE THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN OVERRUN BY THE RULE OF MILITANT-HUNTING SENTINELS, I WATCH THE LAST MOMENTS OF THE X-MEN.

I PLAY IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN BEFORE MAKING MY DECISION.

THE SENTINELS WON'T EXPECT AN ATTACK ON THEIR MAIN HEADQUARTERS, THE BAXTER BUILDING.

TRUE. I WILL TAKE THE LEAD, LOGAN.



STORM TAKES OUT ONE OF THE SENTINELS BY CALLING DOWN THE LIGHTNING THAT, DESPITE HER AGE, SHE STILL COMMANDS.



WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG?

EASY, PETEY. NEXT STOP THE ROOF, AN' THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES.



FOR A MOMENT I AM TEMPTED TO CHOOSE ONE OF THE OTHERS. BUT SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THEM. SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE... MISSING.

SOMETHING ALREADY SEEMS TO BE DEAD WITHIN THEM, AND I AM UNCERTAIN I WOULD BE ABLE TO REBUILD THAT.

GIMME A
"FAST-BALL
SPECIAL,"
PETEY.

I'LL GUT
THAT SUCKER
FROM HEAD
TO HIPS!

COLOSSUS THROWS LOGAN AT THE MECHANICAL MONSTER THAT HAS KILLED SO MANY OF THE X-MEN'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

LOGAN'S EVERY MUSCLE COILS IN ANTICIPATION. HIS FURY BUILDS AND BOILS OVER.

LOGAN HAS BEEN MANY THINGS IN HIS LIFE. X-MAN. WARRIOR. AGENT. MURDERER. FREEDOM FIGHTER.

ALL HIS EXPERIENCES HAVE HONED HIM FOR THIS VERY MOMENT... THIS CHANCE TO HURT AN ENEMY THEY SAY FEELS NOTHING.

THERE ARE NO THOUGHTS, ONLY RAGE, RAGE AND THE NEED TO STRAIGHTEN ALL THAT THE SENTINELS HAVE MADE CROOKED.

HE'S A BERSERKER AGAIN. AN ANIMAL. A RABID COLLECTION OF EXPERIENCES.

IT ISN'T EVEN REMOTELY ENOUGH.



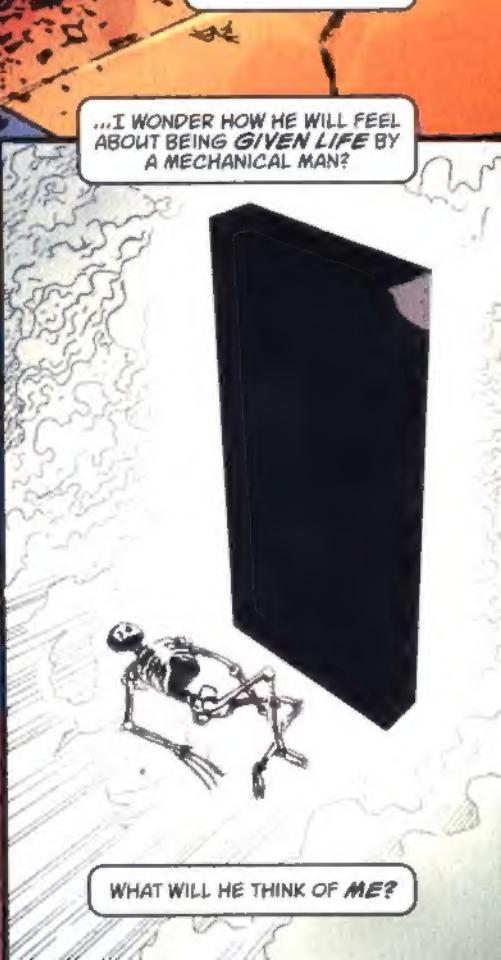
STORM DOES NOT
LAST MUCH LONGER.



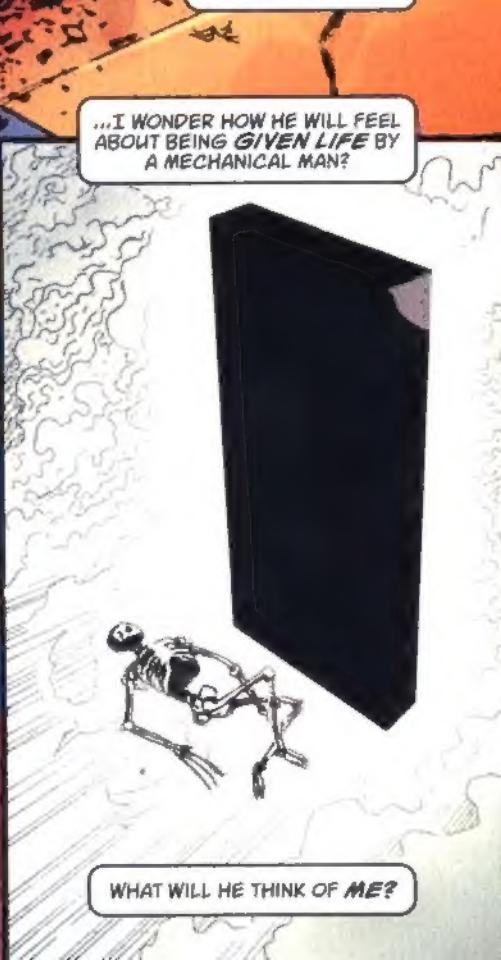
COLOSSUS DIES
A MOMENT LATER.



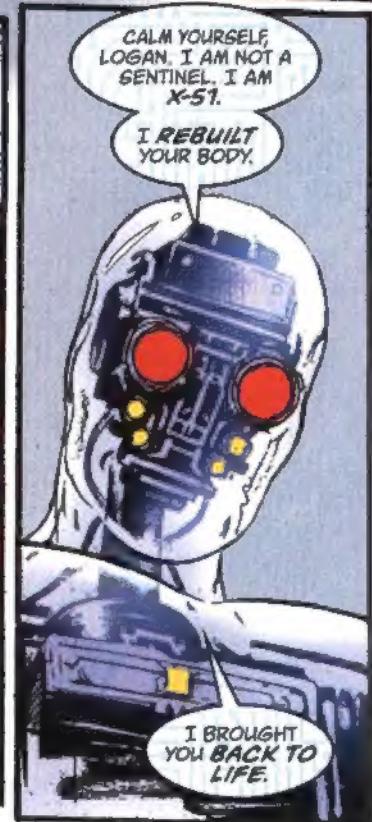
...AND WOLVERINE...



...I WONDER HOW HE WILL FEEL
ABOUT BEING GIVEN LIFE BY
A MECHANICAL MAN?



WHAT WILL HE THINK OF ME?







I THEN INTRODUCE LOGAN TO HYPERION, A SUPER-HUMAN FROM A DIFFERENT EARTH THAT WAS ALSO MANIPULATED BY THE CELESTIALS.

LOGAN LEARNS OF HYPERION'S WORLD, WHERE THE HEROES WEREN'T KILLED BY MACHINES...BUT BY AN ALL-TOO-HUMAN POPULACE, INSTEAD.

A POPULACE AFRAID THAT ITS OWN SUPER-HUMANITY WOULD LEAD TO ITS EVENTUAL EXTINCTION...

...AND SO THE ALL-TOO-HUMAN POPULACE TRUSTED IN AN ALL-TOO-EASY PUSH BUTTON TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS.

HYPERION IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF HIS WORLD...AND OF THE HEROES KNOWN AS THE SQUADRON SUPREME.



YER LUCKY,
BUB. FOR YOU IT WAS
ALL AT ONCE. BETTER'N
WATCHIN' 'EM DIE DAY
AFTER DAY, ONE AFTER
THE OTHER.



IT WAS MANIPULATION ON MY PART TO CHOOSE SPIDER-GIRL. SHE ISN'T LIKE THE OTHERS. HER HUMANITY ISN'T IN QUESTION, LIKE THE OTHERS.

I KNOW THAT LOGAN CANNOT LOOK AT HER WITHOUT SEEING THE YOUNGEST MEMBERS OF THE NOW-SLAID X-MEN. FRIENDS LIKE KITTY PRYDE...JUBILEE...EVEN MAGIK, FOR THAT MATTER.

SHE IS AFRAID OF HIM, AND I SEE THAT LOGAN IS BOthered BY THIS. AGAIN, THIS IS NOT WHAT I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED FROM THE MAN CALLED LOGAN.

I WONDER WHAT SEEING SO MANY FRIENDS DIE HAS DONE TO HIM. PERHAPS I AM RIGHT... PERHAPS IT HAS HUMANIZED HIM...

...THOUGH NOT TO THE DEGREE THAT HE IS NO LONGER OF ANY USE, I HOPE.



I INTRODUCE LOGAN TO LUTHER MANNING NEXT. IS IT PRIDE ON MY PART THAT I HAVE CHOSEN THOSE WHOM I HAVE? OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE? I'VE CHOSEN SO MANY WHO ARE PART HUMAN, PART MECHANICAL...LOGAN, MANNING, THE OTHERS.

DID I PICK MANNING BECAUSE OF THE COMPUTER THAT HAS REPLACED ALMOST TWO-THIRDS OF HIS FLESH? OR BECAUSE OF THE HUMANITY THAT WASN'T DESTROYED WITH THE REST OF HIS BODY?

MANNING IS NOW KNOWN AS DEATHLOK. HE WAS CREATED TO BE A SOLDIER, A KILLING MACHINE. HIS BUILDERS HOPED THE COMPUTER IMPLANTED WITHIN HIM WOULD OVERRIDE HIS ABILITY TO MAKE INDEPENDENT DECISIONS. THEY WERE WRONG.

JUST AS THEY WERE WRONG ABOUT ME.



KILLRAVEN'S WORLD FELL PREY TO A MARTIAN INVASION. KILLRAVEN WAS RAISED TO BE A WARRIOR OF THE WORLDS.

HE NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT WHAT IT MEANT TO BE HUMAN.



ANYONE HUMAN IS A FRIEND OF MINE!

YA AINT GONNA LIVE MUCH LONGER WITH AN ATTITUDE LIKE THAT.
I'VE SEEN A LOT ABOUT HUMANITY THAT'D LEAD YA TA THINK OTHERWISE.



'ORO!
YOU'RE STILL
ALIVE?



BLOODSTORM--ORORO MUNROE--IS THE ONLY MEMBER OF THIS TEAM THAT LOGAN HAS HAD A PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH... OR AT LEAST WITH HER COUNTERPART FROM ANOTHER REALITY

PERHAPS HER HUMANITY IS THE MOST IN QUESTION

BUT WHAT IS HUMANITY APART FROM ITS THIRST FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN ITS CURRENT STATION? HAS HER VAMPIRISM COST HER HER BEING?



I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...

I AM. YOU HAD BETTER KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, LOGAN.

ARNO STARK COMES FROM A WORLD WHERE HE AND I WERE ENEMIES. BUT I WILL NOT BE AN ENEMY OF MANKIND.

PERHAPS THE KNOWLEDGE I HAVE COLLECTED WILL MAKE HIM AN ALLY.

HE DRESSES IN METAL AS I ONCE DRESSED IN HUMANITY



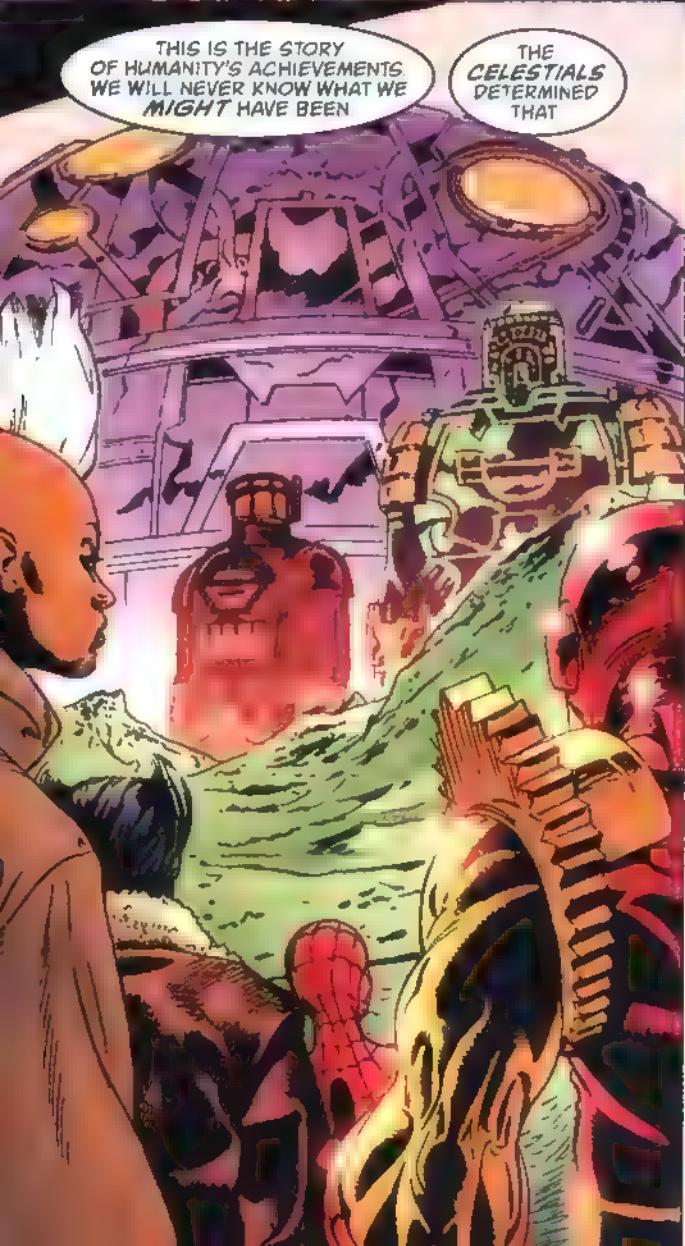
HE WAS A VILLAIN ONCE NOW I WILL MAKE HIM A HERO.

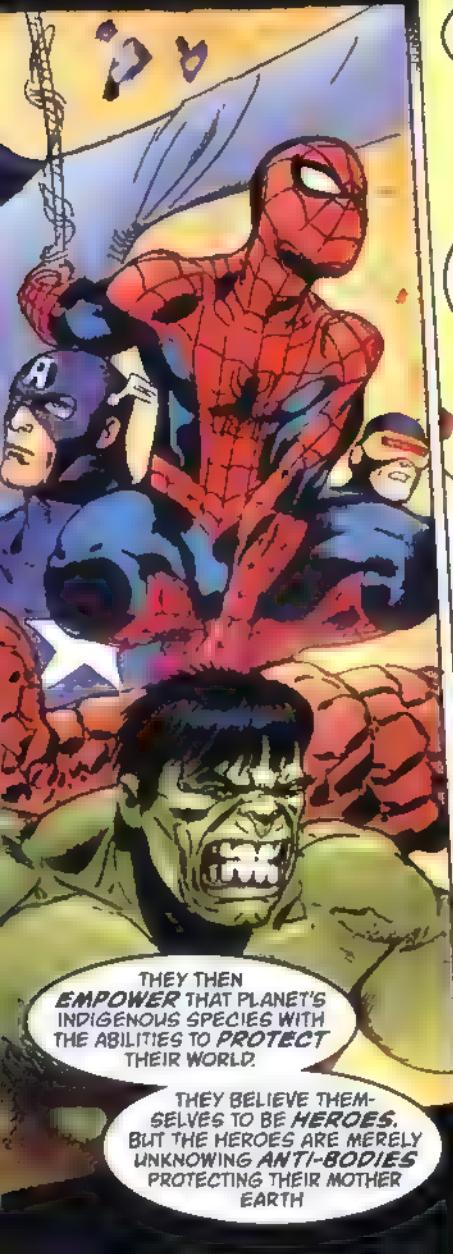
WHERE I COME FROM, THE MUTANTS WERE ALREADY DEAD AND BURIED... A FOOTNOTE, AT BEST



SO YER THE NEXT IRON MAN? GUESS YA'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME SORT OF HEART PROBLEM TO WEAR THE SUIT

YOU'RE NEXT, MUTIE TRASH





YOU HAVE TO
UNDERSTAND, LUTHER, THAT
WE "HEROES". THE BEINGS THEY
MANIPULATED US INTO BECOMING...
AREN'T EVEN AWARE OF
THE CELESTIALS'
INFLUENCE

IN FACT,
ONE OF THOSE
MANIPULATED BEINGS
BELIEVED HE WAS THE
DEVIL MEPHISTO
HIMSELF...

...AND
BELIEVING THIS
TO BE TRUE, THAT
THERE WAS A
JUDGMENT DAY
COMING



THIS MEPHISTO
CREATED A ROAD-
BLOCK OF SORTS IN
LINEAR TIME ..WITH A
DETOUR THAT SENT TIME
BACK IN AN ONGOING
SERIES OF CYCLES,
CREATING ALTERNATE
WORLDS AND
HISTORIES..

...WHICH
EVENTUALLY
ALLOWED HIM TO
ESCAPE WHAT HE
PERCEIVED TO BE
THE END OF
HISTORY.

IN THIS
WAY, MEPHISTO
BECAME IMMORTAL,
THE ETERNAL DEVIL
HE ONLY THOUGHT
HIMSELF TO BE

YER GONNA
EXPLAIN ALL THIS TO
ME LATER, R GHT,
'PUTER?

SO OUR
EXISTENCE IS AN
ACCIDENT? THE RESULT
OF MANIPULATION FROM A
BEING WHO ONLY THOUGHT
HE WAS SOMETHING GREATER
THAN HE ACTUALLY
WAS?

YES.
I AM SO
SORRY

DON'T BE
I ALWAYS KNEW
SOMETHING WAS
WRONG

I THINK
WE ALL DID,
BUB.

SO WHICH IS
THE REAL WORLD,
THEN? YOURS,
X-51?



I AM NOT
SURE, KILLRAVEN...
WE ALL MIGHT BE JUST
FRAGMENTS OF
THE ORIGINAL, FOR
ALL I KNOW.

I'VE HEARD
THAT THERE WAS
A UNIVERSE BEFORE
OURS...ONE THAT WAS
DESTROYED BY THE
CARELESSNESS OF THE
CELESTIALS. PERHAPS
THAT IS THE REAL
ONE

SO
WHY ARE WE
HERE?



WE MUST WARN
EACH OF THE ALTERNATIVE
EARTHS ABOUT THE CELE-
STIAL GROWING AT THE CORE
OF THEIR PLANET...

LOOK, I'M NOT
CERTAIN MY EARTH IS EVEN
WORTH SAVING ANYMORE THE
MARTIANS HAVE PRETTY
MUCH--

AN' NEW
YORK IS AS GOOD
AS NUKE'D ON MY
WORLD UNLESS YOU
CAN SEND US TO THE
PAST, I'M NOT
CERTAI---

...BY BRINGING
THE REVELATION I JUST
SHOWED YOU TO THE *REED*
RICHARDS OF EACH
WORLD.

IF I SEND
YOU TO THE PAST,
IT WILL ONLY EXTEND
MEPHISTO'S REALM AND
CREATE ANOTHER
WORLD TO GIVE
WARNING TO

INSTEAD, THERE
ARE OTHER WORLDS
TO SAVE NOW... OTHER
CONTINUITIES *BESIDES*
YOUR OWN THAT RE-
QUIRE AID.

I HAVE
WATCHED
EACH OF YOUR
LIVES AND
SPOKEN TO
YOU INDIVID-
UALLY...

...YOU WILL BE
REWARDED FOR YOUR
HEROISM I HAVE SEEN
WHAT EACH OF YOU *MOST*
DESRIES, AND BY UTILIZING
WHAT'S EQUIPMENT, I CAN
OFFER IT TO YOU

I HAVE PAIRED
YOU INTO *TEAMS* AND WILL
TRANSPORT YOU AS *CLOSE*
TO THE RICHARDS OF THESE
WORLDS AS POSSIBLE

THESE
COMMUNICA-
TORS WILL HELP
YOU CONTACT
ME.

DOESN'T
SOUND LIKE
WE HAVE ANY
CHOICE...

DON'T
YOU MEAN ANY
"ALTERNA-
TIVE"?

HYPERION AND I ARE SENT TO A WORLD WHERE SCIENCE IS CONSIDERED BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE NATURAL ORDER

THE DIVERGENCE POINT FOR THIS PARTICULAR CONTINUITY OCCURRED WITH THE DISCOVERY OF A MYSTIC AMULET BELONGING TO THE ANCIENT HYBORIAN WIZARD, KULAN GATH.

REED RICHARDS WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AN OUTLAW ON THIS EARTH

WHAT KIND OF WORLD HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME TO, X-51?

I BELIEVE THEY ONCE CALLED HIM "STRETCH," DID THEY NOT?!

ARE WE ALREADY TOO LATE?

THIS FATE
AWAITS ALL THAT
HOLD ON TO THE
OLD WAYS OF
SCIENCE! THIS
IS MY WORLD
NOW!

I WILL
NOT BE BOUND
BY SUPERSTITIOUS,
OUTMODED THINKING
OF MATHEMATICS
AND LOGIC!

I AM
KULAN
GATH!

DO NOT
PRAY FOR
ME, BUT TO
ME!

BUT SCIENCE
IS NECESSARY
TO SAVE THIS WORLD!
HOW CAN WE OVER-
COME REED'S
DEATH?

RICHARDS
IS DEAD...? WHO
CAN SAVE THIS
PLACE NOW?

SINCE I AM
GOD HERE, I BELIEVE
THAT QUESTION SHOULD
BE DIRECTED TOWARD
ME.

I DEFY
EXPLANATION,
STRANGER



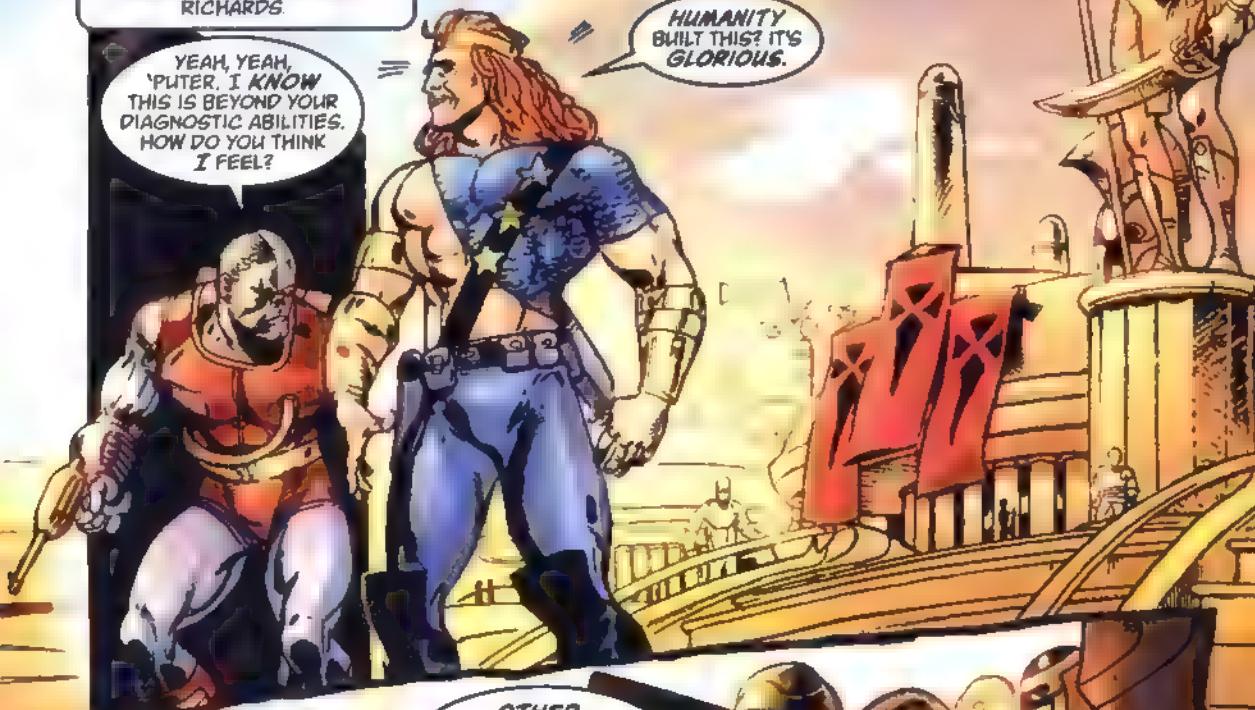
DEATHLOK AND KILLRAVEN ARE SENT TO A CONTINUITY RULED BY THE POWER-MAD SATYRNIN.

WHILE MY APPEARANCE MIGHT SUGGEST SCIENCE TO THE CONTINUITY HYPERION AND I VISITED...

...HERE, ONLY THOSE TRAINED FOR WAR MIGHT SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY FIND AND WARN THAT REALM'S REED RICHARDS.

YEAH, YEAH,
'PUTER, I KNOW
THIS IS BEYOND YOUR
DIAGNOSTIC ABILITIES.
HOW DO YOU THINK
I FEEL?

HUMANITY
BUILT THIS? IT'S
GLORIOUS.



OTHER-WORLDERS! HALT
IN THE NAME OF HER
SUPREMACY!

WHY
DON'T I
THINK THIS
IS THE WAY
TO BEGIN OUR
AMBASSADOR-
SHIP?

DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
IT! WE'LL JUST
TELL THEM TO TAKE
US TO THEIR
LEADER!

DON'T YOU
EVER SAY THAT
AGAIN! MARTIAN
HUMOR DOESN'T
WORK WITH
ME!



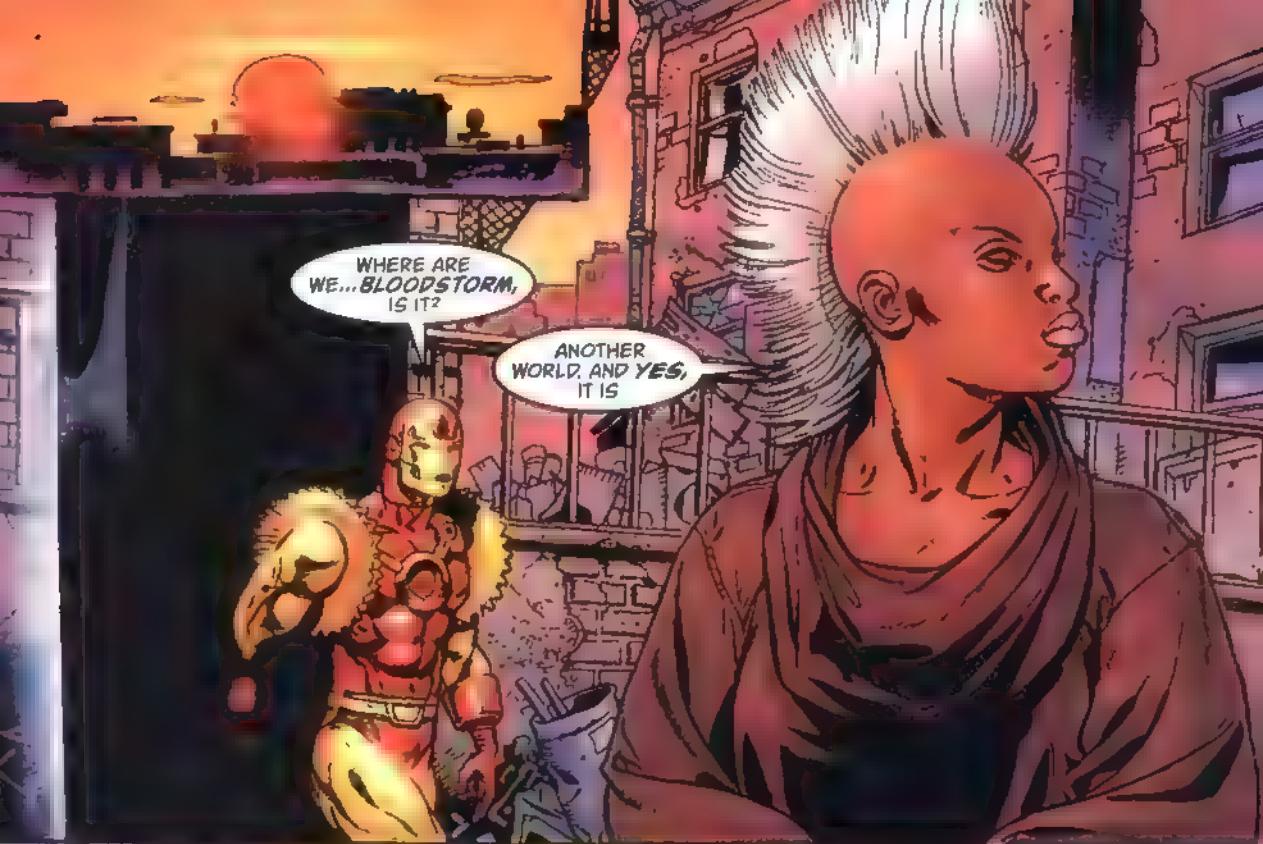
MY COMPUTER
SAYS THAT IF WE JUST LAY
DOWN OUR WEAPONS AND
GIVE UP THAT CHANCES ARE
PRETTY GOOD WE'LL BE
BROUGHT INTO SATYRNIN'S
PRESENCE.

WHEN'S
THE LAST TIME YOU
SURRENDERED?

NEVER.

THOUGHT SO





WHERE ARE WE... BLOODSTORM, IS IT?

ANOTHER WORLD, AND YES, IT IS.



SO WHAT ARE YOU GETTING OUT OF THIS? THAT ROBOT SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING WE ALL WANTED. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

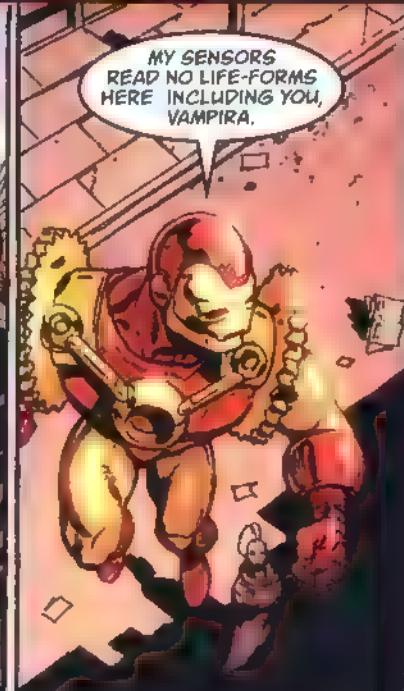


A CURE FOR MY HUNGER, IRON MAN. IT HAS... CONSUMED EVERYONE I'VE EVER CARED FOR. IT HAS CONSUMED ME. AND I WILL BE FREE OF IT.

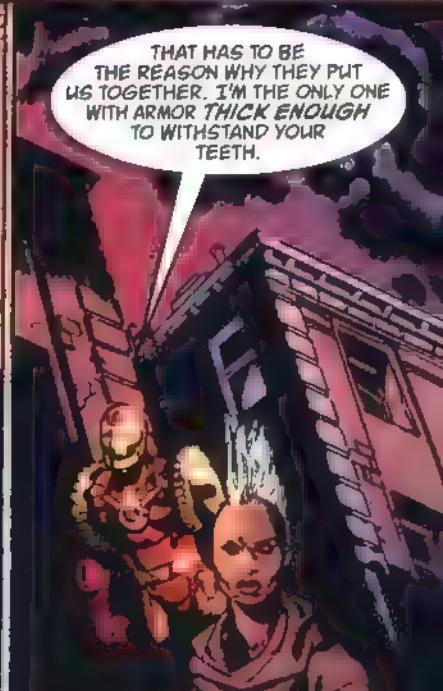


DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY I'M DOING THIS?

NO.



MY SENSORS READ NO LIFE-FORMS HERE INCLUDING YOU, VAMPIRA.



THAT HAS TO BE THE REASON WHY THEY PUT US TOGETHER. I'M THE ONLY ONE WITH ARMOR THICK ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND YOUR TEETH.



SO REED
RICHARDS IS THE
PRESIDENT? THAT'S
GREAT! THIS IS GOING
TO BE A PIECE OF
CAKE!

DO YOU THINK
WE SHOULD MAKE AN
APPOINTMENT, WOLVERINE?
WE CAN'T JUST WALK IN THERE
AND SAY "HEY, MR. PRESIDENT,
WE'RE HERE TO SAVE
YOUR WORLD."

HE'LL
SEE US.

'SPECIALLY IF HE
DOESN'T WANT ANOTHER
OVAL ORIFICE.

THAT
IS SO
BAD.
YOU
DO KNOW MY
FATHER.

SO I'VE NEVER
BEEN HERE BEFORE...
IS THERE A BELL OR A
BUTTON WE NEED TO
PRESS?

RELAX, KID.
I THINK WE PRESSED
IT ALREADY. SHOULDN'T
YER SPIDER-SENSE
HAVE WARNED US
OF THIS?

IT'S BEEN GOING
CRAZY EVER SINCE WE
GOT HERE!

HOLD IT
RIGHT THERE!
HANDS IN THE
AIR!

STAND
BACK, SPIDER-
GIRL.







YOU
SHOULD HAVE
MADE AN APPOINT-
MENT!

YIKES!

TO BE CONTINUED...